Sanctions against international terrorism: States’ cooperation and the United Nations

The UN sanctions against Al-Qaida and Taliban represent one among the many globally ongoing efforts of countering international terrorism. They were put in place to undermine the ability of Al-Qaida and Taliban to raise and transfer money, to cross borders and to purchase arms. While the ultimate responsibility for implementing UN Security Council resolutions rests with states, they need to be provided with relevant information to enable them to carry out the task. Effective counterterrorism action seems to demand strong multilateral cooperation and information-sharing in many critical areas. However, counterterrorism is also highly sensitive to states as it is linked to their security concerns and thereby to their very raison d’être. Therefore attaining states’ cooperation and compliance at the UN level to support the sanctions effort may also face several problems.

The focus of the thesis is on the cooperation of UN member states’ with the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee. It studies in what manner states indicate their support to the sanctions case by cooperating and sharing information, and how they comply in regard to two procedures of the sanctions case: the UN list of the sanctions targets as well as the states’ reporting tasks. In order for sanctions to be targeted accurately, the list relies on the submission of names and on getting additional information to facilitate the identification of the targets. Reporting is one of the procedures set up by the sanctions resolutions and represents a crucial means for the Committee to receive information on the status of implementation on the ground, and thus is also crucial to monitoring the sanctions. The study looks at how states’ threat assessments affect in the case.

The cooperation of states is here understood in a rather broad way, meaning information-sharing, compliance and engagement of states. The view is on the different supportive and impeding elements of cooperation that are present and have impact in the procedures of the sanctions case in the context of international counterterrorism action. It links to the question of the possibilities and limits of the UN in managing sanctions against international terrorism.

The data of the study consisted primarily of UN documents, those being the reports of two successive independent UN group of experts set to monitor, report and give recommendations to the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee. The reports gave an overview on implementation, introduced relevant themes and summed up information on different aspects of the sanctions case. The analysis confirmed the essential role of information-sharing to the sanctions effort. There are different factors present that affect states’ cooperation and compliance in the case. These mostly link to the characteristics of counterterrorism as well as the procedures in place.

Keywords
- counterterrorism
- sanctions
- United Nations
- multilateralism
- international cooperation
- terrorisminvastainen toiminta
- terrorismi
- pakotteet
- Yhdistyneet Kansakunnat
- multilateralismi
- kansainvälinen yhteistyö

Additional information